

# SUNlite

Shedding some light on UFOlogy and UFOs

*Do UFO statistics represent a valid pursuit for more knowledge about the elusive phenomenon, or do they merely reflect frustration that none of the individual reports are capable of standing on their own two feet? Are UFO statistics a bold first step.....or a desperate last resort?*

*Allan Hendry (The UFO Handbook)*

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# It only takes one...but...

Front: An airplane leaves an interesting contrail as it flies westward towards the setting sun. Contrails may have been the source for this issue's Blue Book unknown.

Left: I photographed this Polaris A-3 launch from an SSBN off the coast of Florida almost 30 years ago. A similar launch off the coast of California involving a Trident missile produced UFO, and meteor, reports on September 12th.

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When "The UFO Chronicles" posted last issue's editorial, it received some responses that indicated some proponents did not understand what I had written. Apparently, they only looked at the image "The UFO chronicles" had posted with the editorial and thought I meant the "scientific study" of UFOs was dead. I never stated this. What I stated was that the "science of UFOlogy" is dead. Instead of attempting to collect the verifiable evidence they claim exists using scientific methodologies, UFOlogy has chosen to sensationalize the subject. That is why I consider UFOlogy, as a science, dead.

Meanwhile, UFO proponents have been presenting the idea that it will only take "one case" to prove that UFOs are something other than natural/man-made phenomena misperceived by the witness. I concede that it will only take one but my counterargument is, "Why haven't we seen that one case by now?" It has been over sixty years since Kenneth Arnold and not one case has established the conclusion that UFOs are "intelligently operated unknown craft" or some other exotic phenomena unknown to science. UFO proponents can list various cases they find "conclusive" but the truth of the matter is that their evidence isn't good enough. To date, there is no "one case" that meets the standard of conclusive evidence.

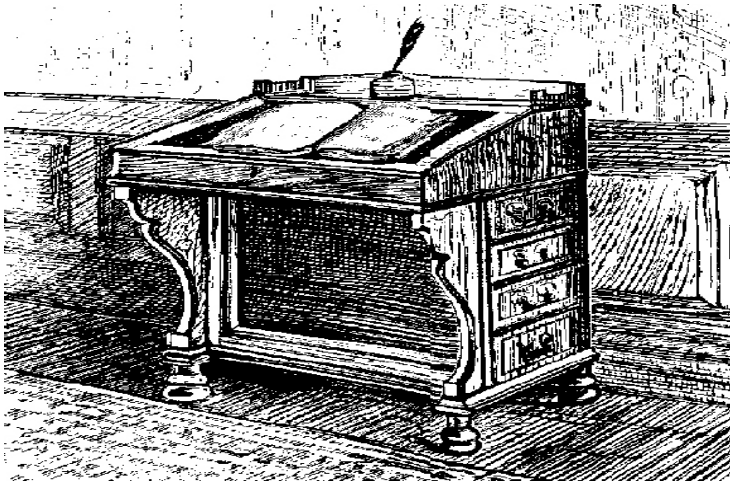
Writing about this in "The UFO Handbook", Allan Hendry noted that UFOlogists either wait for "the one case" or they attempt to examine the existing reports for patterns. Since "the one case" still has not presented itself (and probably never will based on the past sixty years), UFOlogists mire themselves down with collecting UFO reports and publishing analyses over and over again with similar results that the previous studies had produced. I discuss the problems associated with collecting and evaluating UFO reports on page 12. Will UFOlogists learn from the mistakes of the past or will they continue to repeat them?

Finally, I would like to publicly thank Marty Kottmeyer for another one of his articles. He submitted an article with the title of "A Catalogue of nuclear motifs in the UFO mythos". Like most catalogues, it is very extensive and too lengthy for this newsletter. I originally thought of breaking it up into sections and presenting it in multiple issues but it would not do the article justice. I decided to include his concluding remarks in this issue. Hopefully, that will be enough for now.



# Who's blogging UFOs?

## Hot topics and varied opinions



**Ryan Mullahy commented about how MUFON can't seem to retrieve their case files.** Despite what "Hanger one" shows, it appears that MUFON has all their case files scattered between all the little fiefdoms that populate the country. While one MUFON group might share their files, others protect them like the were they were the most "precious" thing on earth. As a result, nobody seems to have all the files even though James Carrion stated they had scanned all the case files onto a DVD while he was director. You have to love MUFON. One wonders what is really in these "case files" if they refuse to openly share them with the world. Perhaps what they contain may debunk some of MUFON's most treasured cases. Is there a confession by Ed Walters in one of those files?

**Frank Warren published a reader submitted UFO report from September 13, 2014.** The reader was in Pagosa Springs, Colorado and saw a triangular UFO hovering in the sky. They even included an image they took with their camera. I recog-

nized it as a potential research balloon. On the afternoon of the 13th, a balloon was launched from Fort Sumner, New Mexico with the title of JPL remote 625N. By noon (MDT), the balloon had ascended to 126,000 feet and was moving towards the northwest. It passed over Albuquerque around sunset and was seen by thousands of people. It was also tracked by three local television news-casts. The flight hovered to the northwest of Albuquerque most of the evening and began to descend in the night hours. Pagosa Springs is about 150 miles to the NNW of Albuquerque and about 100 miles north of the balloon's most northern position. The witness gave no directions but it appears that this was what they saw.

**Stanton Friedman aired his usual complaints about those with an opposing opinion about the infamous MJ-12 documents.**

This started when Kevin Randle posted a three part series on the UFO Chronicles blog where he created a rather well documented appendix for his "Myth of MJ-12". Mr. Friedman then would then issue a challenge to publicly debate any of the MJ-12 opponents. Alejandro Rojas, of Open Minds, quickly accepted the challenge. He proposed a debate on Open Minds radio since it was too late to schedule a debate for the 2015 International UFO congress meeting. Meanwhile, Kevin Randle, who sparked Friedman's original commentary, responded on The UFO Chronicles blog with a rebuttal. Friedman responded and Randle countered. Friedman reacted to that and Rojas chimed in with some comments. As usual, these kinds of debates are worthless because they solve absolutely nothing and only entrench the opposing opinions. The real issue is Mr. Friedman apparently can't convince anybody, outside of his inner circle, that the MJ-12 documents are authentic. If he has problems convincing UFOlogists, how can he expect to convince people outside the UFO community? Can scientists really take his work seriously if he is not willing to listen to other points of view without resorting to his standard blustery responses?

**Speaking of Kevin Randle, his blog entry about the Trent photographs sparked a great deal of debate in the comments section.**

Joel Carpenter's theory that a car/truck mirror was the source of the model was apparently falsified by David Rudiak and others, who stated the wiring could not support the weight of the mirror. IPACO's analysis also appeared to be considered invalid by the proponents. Are the Trent photographs the greatest proof that UFOs are alien spaceships? Most skeptics still consider that it is possible that these are hoaxed but the proponents are pronouncing they have to be authentic. I guess one can always dream up reasons to reject the hoax hypothesis no matter what evidence is presented.

**Robert Sheaffer responded with a very informative article, where he presented a history of the photographs and various investigations done over the years.**

The mysterious investigator mentioned by Sheaffer contacted me two years ago and showed me some of his analysis. I was intrigued by his teasers but he failed to follow through. The problem with all of these analyses is that they were conducted using scans of the prints and not the negatives. It is hard to say if these images show threads or scratches. While these results appear promising, they are not 100% convincing. On the other hand, the proponents for the photographs can not prove they recorded an alien spaceship. This leaves us with two opposing hypotheses with the alien spaceship being the least likely. I am NOT convinced they show an alien spaceship, which means I am of the opinion that they probably are photographs of a model of some kind hung from a very thin thread.

**There was a lot of noise circulating on the internet about how the MOD had "discovered" more UFO files.** There seems to be the implication that the files were something withheld because they were classified or important evidence. While the titles of the files are known, their content has yet to be released since it will take some time for the MOD to declassify and redact the content. UFOlogists have made a stir because these files contain things like "Air Traffic control ow flying UFOs" and "ADGE UFO reports". Interested in what might be in the files, I contacted Dr. David Clarke. His response was to mention that he had discussed this in the August issue of Fortean times, where he wrote:

## Who's blogging UFOs? (Cont'd)

*It was inevitable that some paperwork missed inclusion in the ten file tranches released between 2008 and 2013. Among these are five UFO policy files, compiled by the UFO desk officers at the Defence Intelligence Staff during their work on the Condign report, that MoD promised to release ten years ago (see FT 189:30). Recognising the continuing public interest in their X-files a 'final search' of MoD archives identified a further 13 miscellaneous UFO-related files dating back to 1971. Some of these 'new' files include collections of sighting reports compiled by the RAF Air Defence staff whose papers were not included in the original release programme. All 18 files are now being prepared for release at The National Archives later this year.*

So there is a reasonable explanation for why the files were "missing". According to Dr. Clarke, he has seen some of these files and there is nothing earth shattering in them. He told me that a lot of these files contain duplicates of the already released files, newspaper clippings, and low quality UFO reports. UFOlogists will try to turn this anthill into a mountain but Clarke states these files are of limited interest.

**Tim Hebert has continued his analysis of the infamous 1968 Minot, North Dakota case.** This case has become the darling of many UFOlogists but Tim pointed out some rather interesting problems with the data. Could it be possible that the B-52 mistook the ground lighting of N-07 facility as a UFO below them? Is it possible that the witnesses on the ground mistook various stars as UFOs? These explanations sound reasonable but I am sure that the proponents of the case have a different opinion and will find reasons to dismiss these possibilities.

**Is it a surprise that New York has a large number of UFO reports?** Cheryl Costa makes a big deal about the large number of UFO reports and gives us a few examples of recent reports. Unfortunately, three of the five listed appear to match fireball reports in the AMS database. Like so many UFO proponents, Costa misses the fact that a lot of these UFO reports have explanations. It is not quantity that matters but quality. A lot of these cases are low quality or can be explained.

**Speaking of fireballs, a bright meteor lit up the sky over the northeastern United States and Canada on October 2nd.** There was even a video showing the fireball disintegrate behind a news reporter doing a broadcast report. I found the arguments against this being a meteor rather poor. The one news report said it was not a fireball because it did not light up the sky. Several reports in the American Meteor Society (AMS) database mention this bright flash of light but they were much closer to the fireball's flight path. The AMS even had a video of it from Keystone College, which clearly shows that it was a fireball. Montreal, where the video was taken, was far from the apparent ground track over Pennsylvania/New Jersey. Their recording would not have shown the fireball at its true brilliance. Because of this newscast video, there was some that thought this might be a genuine UFO, a plane's exhaust, or a reflection off of a glass behind the reporter. Close examination of the video demonstrates it was none of these things. The meteor started off as a faint object that was barely visible, it then traveled in a straight trajectory as its magnitude rose quickly and reached a steady value. Towards the end, it appeared to flash momentarily and then fade away. What apparently got some UFO proponents excited was that the light was not a point source. This had to do with the camera's focus being on the reporter and not the distant skyline. The lights on those buildings were also out of focus explaining why the meteor appeared the way it did. This was nothing more than a bright meteor and the evidence supports that conclusion.

**Isaac Koi has created a web page that exposes many of the hoax UFO videos that populate the internet.** Koi continues to provide excellent material for UFO researchers and enthusiasts. It is a shame that all these videos are still accepted by some as proof of alien visitation. I wonder how many will appear on the next season of Hanger one?

**Billy Cox made some noise about a recent UFO sighting with radar data that indicated an aircraft almost collided with a UFO.** His source is MUFON's Glen Schulze, who analyzed the radar data for an event in Bethlehem, PA on March 13, 2013. According to Schulze, the aircraft, traveling NW, took a sharp turn to the northeast to avoid an oncoming non-transponding radar target (s) that was traveling towards the ESE. After the near collision event, the nontransponding target(s) dispersed and quickly vanished from radar. We don't have any altitude data, which means we don't even know if the non-transponding target and the aircraft were near or at the same altitude. Something that appears to be not mentioned here was that the winds above 9,000 feet were from the NW and WNW according to Pittsburgh's March 14, 2013 0000Z radiosonde data. Upton, NY had winds from the WNW below 3,000 feet. In the MUFON Journal plots, one can see many "skin paints" during the time period moving in the same general direction indicating that these "contacts" might all have been driven by the wind. It also might have been a flock of birds. We don't really know. There apparently was no contact with the aircraft's pilot, crew, or aviation reports regarding the "near miss". Did the pilot maneuver to avoid this object or was it simply a coincidence that they turned near the UFOs location? MUFON did not even bother to state what type of aircraft was involved (private, commuter, jumbo jet?) or the speeds of the aircraft/"UFO". The UFO's speed appears to have been about a third or less than that of the aircraft. The plots are confusing as they don't give the time marks for the plots. They simply list the tracks with one time stamp when it is clear that the time of the track shown was many minutes and not just one. Perhaps it was too much to ask of the investigators to provide this kind of information in their report.

**A pilot photographed some strange lights over the Pacific ocean in late August.** There was a lot of speculation about what they might have been but this story, written by Curtis Seaman, pretty much identifies it as a flotilla of ships of some kind. I am of the opinion that they were probably fishing vessels and not a military exercise.

# The Roswell Corner

## Neoprene in the desert

I recently read David Rudiak criticizing my neoprene tests that I published in SUNlite 4-4 and 4-5. When I published my first results in SUNlite 4-4, I recall that Mr. Rudiak's main objection was that New Hampshire had too little sunlight and was too low an altitude to replicate the New Mexican desert. However, I did have James Carlson, who was in New Mexico, duplicate the test with very similar results. Lance Moody's results from Ohio also agreed.

Now Mr. Rudiak is complaining that I gave the balloon material TOO MUCH (not too little) sunlight by propping it up so it was constantly exposed to sunlight. He fails to recognize that my tests were NOT designed to duplicate the conditions that a balloon would receive on the Foster ranch. My goal was to see how neoprene reacted to sunlight and compare the results to the claims made by Roswell proponents, like Mr. Rudiak. I stated the two major claims I examined were:

1. The balloon would turn to ash after a few weeks or so in the desert.
2. The balloon material visible in the photographs were from a balloon that was quickly exposed to the sun and shredded to make it appear like it had been left in the desert for several weeks.

In both cases, my tests (and the tests of Moody and Carlson) revealed that, even with maximum possible exposure, the neoprene materials did not do either. The material took about a week to darken like the material in the photographs and, even after 30 days of exposure to direct sunlight, the material did not turn to ash. This indicate that the two major claims made by Roswell crashologists about neoprene balloons are not supported by these tests.

## Eeny, Meeny, Jelly Beanie, the Roswell secrets are about to be revealed!

Anthony Bragalia has once again done his best to promote Roswell. Now he is stating an avenue to pursue is to use "Remote



viewing" to uncover the secrets of this controversial event. He recounts numerous attempts to identify where the debris and documentation is located. These sources are dubious and do not shed any light on the matter. However, Bragalia points out that there must be something to remote viewing because the US government had attempted to employ this in the past. What he does not seem to understand is that the intelligence agencies use of remote viewing stopped because they determined that it was no better than guesswork.

Bragalia's argument is not very convincing but it demonstrates how desperate the Roswell crashologists are becoming. Unable to find evidence that is convincing, Bragalia has determined that this kind of "hocus pocus" might uncover the precious proof. In my opinion, he could accomplish the same results using a deck of Tarot cards, an Ouija board, horoscopes, or palm reading.

## The "Roswell slides" slowly fading away into obscurity

Rich Reynolds, who has changed his blogs name from UFO Iconoclast(s) to UFO conjecture(s), is reporting that the Roswell investigating team have lost control of the infamous slides. Apparently, the owner has chosen to go the route of having the slides shown on television. If this is true, expect the slides to appear with much fanfare. I wonder who the lucky network will be? I doubt it will appear on "NOVA".

## MUFON sparks USAF interest in saucer crash?

At least that is what Jan Harzan wants everyone to believe. According to the story, MUFON setup a crashed saucer model near Wickenburg, Arizona, for their investigators to train upon. A plane had spotted the model on the ground and, twenty minutes later, two F-16s from Luke AFB buzzed the site at low altitude. This was followed by a police helicopter, which also was interested in the UFO. Harzan then proclaimed the USAF does investigate UFOs and this is proof.

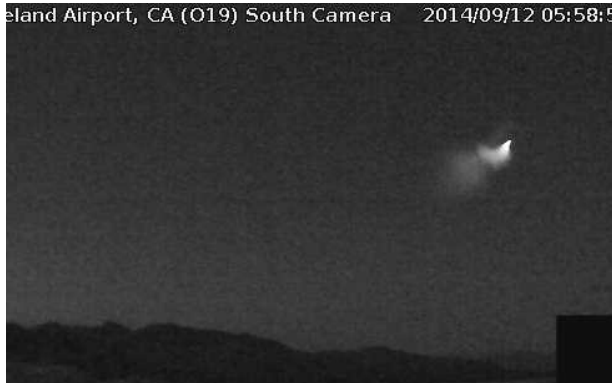
There could be another interpretation. The USAF could have been on a standard training flight that day and happened to fly near the site. Wickenburg is sandwiched between the Gladden Military Operating Area and the Alert area for student training (Luke is a pilot training facility). From the report, it seems they made a single high speed pass at low altitude. At high speed, the pilots probably wouldn't have seen much more than a blur on the ground. They appear to be more interested in reaching a destination than observation of ground targets. I also find it interesting that Luke AFB would took twenty minutes to "scramble" two aircraft to a location only 40 miles away (about 5 minutes or less from Luke AFB). Meanwhile, the police helicopter may have been curious about what they saw on the ground while on routine patrol. MUFON/Harzan's conclusions, like just about everything MUFON states publicly, is not based on facts but speculation based on a will to believe.



## TRIDENT MISSILE LAUNCH SPARKS UFO REPORTS

On the morning of September 12th, west coast observers were treated to an interesting sky display that generated UFO reports and a lot of media attention. This event demonstrated, once again, that UFO organizations do not appear to be interested in solving UFO cases. Instead, they choose to promote UFO mysteries.

### The event



Around 6:00 AM, on the 12th of September, observers in California, Oregon, Washington, and Nevada reported seeing a large comet-like object in the sky that was visible for several minutes. This image of object (see image to the left) taken from the south facing camera of Kneeland airport in northern California demonstrates how prominent it was to the observers.<sup>1</sup> The most likely source of the event was something launched from Vandenberg AFB but there were no launches that morning. Another source that was considered was that it was a meteor. However, meteors do not last that long and their debris trails/ion trains usually do not appear like this. When I saw the images, I thought that it was a venting rocket booster that was in orbit. However, Ted Molczan assured me that there was no booster that could have produced the display. For 24 hours, I was stumped until I read one news report involving a statement by the US Navy.

### The source

KTVN-TV of Reno, Nevada reported that the US Navy had stated that they had launched three Trident Missiles before 6AM on the 12th<sup>2</sup>. I directed this report towards Molczan, who seemed to think this was plausible. My concern had to do with the Trident Missile being a solid rocket design and this appeared to be a liquid fueled rocket. Molczan then directed me towards a similar incident that had been recorded from La Palma, in the Canary islands, the year before.<sup>3</sup> In that case, an astrophotographer had recorded a similar cloud rising over the ocean in the west. This turned out to be a Trident missile launch from a submarine in the Atlantic. The images from the September 12th event bear a remarkable similarity to that event. I then remembered photographing a night launch of a Polaris A-3 missile back in August of 1986. It too had a cloud that existed after launch that resembled an ion trail left by a bright meteor (see image to the right). Both of these events indicated to me that it was possible that the cloud that was seen was caused by a submarine launched missile.



Ted Molczan then sent me a Notice to Airman (NOTAM) he discovered that read<sup>4</sup>:

NAVAREA XII 309/2014 (GEN)

(Cancelled by NAVAREA XII 323/2014)

NORTH PACIFIC.

MISSILES.

1. HAZARDOUS OPERATIONS 110800Z TO 180001Z SEP IN AREAS:

A. BOUND BY

34-24N 124-45W, 34-38N 123-00W,

35-00N 123-00W, 35-20N 124-45W.

B. BETWEEN

34-30N 34-54N AND 127-54W 129-06W.

C. BOUND BY

34-06N 134-30W, 34-12N 131-18W,

34-48N 131-18W, 34-36N 134-30W.

D. BOUND BY

29-12N 161-30W, 30-06N 157-24W,

31-24N 157-48W, 30-18N 161-48W.

E. BOUND BY

15-54N 165-00E, 18-00N 169-00E,

18-42N 168-30E, 17-00N 164-36E.

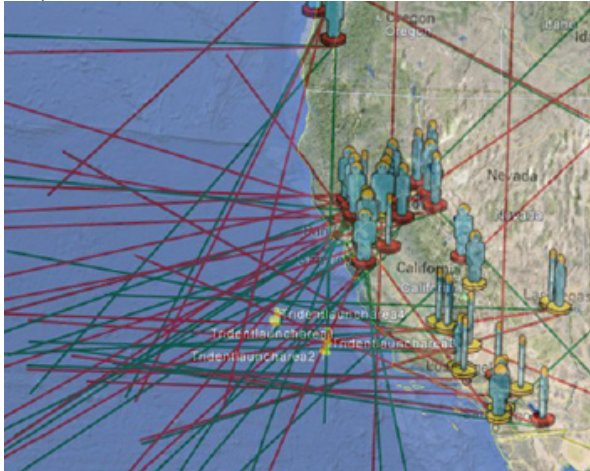
2. CANCEL THIS MSG 180101Z SEP 14.

(060940Z SEP 2014)

These boundaries include an area about 200 miles SSW of San Francisco and another area that was between Kwajalein and Wake island. It appears these were the launch sites and the impact areas.

## Comparing data collection and evaluation

There were three sources of observational data that I examined when I was looking at this case. The Mutual UFO Network (MUFON)<sup>5</sup> and National UFO reporting center (NUFORC)<sup>6</sup> both had a collection of UFO reports/stories. Unfortunately, the data in these reports were pretty much worthless. All one has to do is compare these reports to the ones filed to the American Meteor Society for the same event!<sup>7</sup> The two UFO reporting centers could not be evaluated because they just contained what the witnesses thought they saw. Meanwhile, the AMS database set contained details that could be quantified and evaluated. The AMS used that data to give us a location for where the object was seen. It was most interesting that the bulk of observations pointed towards the launch area identified by the NOTAM provided by Molczan.



Another item revealed by the AMS data is the fact that some observers just got their directions mixed up. This indicates the inherent problem with isolated UFO reports. Individual witnesses might get their directions wrong. It is only when one gets a collection of individual sightings from different locations does it become clear where the observed object was probably located.

The AMS provided enough information to confirm the probable source of the sighting. Meanwhile, MUFON and NUFORC failed to do the same. In fact, their data was so bad, that Jason McClellan, of Open Minds and "Hanger one" fame, concluded that "experts" were perplexed by this event and implied that this UFO was something that could not be explained.<sup>8</sup> Apparently, UFOlogists and their organizations were more interested in promot-

ing a mystery than solving one.

## MUFON fails again

MUFON claims to be interested in examining UFOs scientifically but when it came to this case, they decided to promote other items and never mention what their investigators (assuming there was an investigation) concluded. Either their investigators were "perplexed" as McClellan indicated or they did not want to let everyone know that this event had a reasonable explanation. This means they are guilty of incompetence or a cover-up. In either case, MUFON failed to live up to their standard of performing "The Scientific study of UFOs for the benefit of humanity". If they can not be open and honest about an UFO, how can one trust them to be honest and open about UFOs?

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# UFOS AND NUKES FOLLOW-UP

My article last month sparked a response by Dr. David Clarke. He pointed me towards a blog entry he wrote on November 21, 2010, where he quoted a document with the title of "Unidentified Aerial phenomena in the UK air defense region" (Commonly referred to as "The Condign report"). Dr. Clarke notes that it was classified secret and they attempted to see if UFOs were spying on strategic assets as claimed by UFO proponents:

*UAP events reported from RAF stations were examined...for a four year period for a repeated UAP presence. Only six widely-dispersed RAF stations reported one event each. These locations were found to operate in a variety of roles, rather than together representing a group with specific strategic (for example, nuclear) importance, which some have suggested attract higher than expected UAP activity...It is probably the case, because of the radar and visual look out maintained as part of the normal role of the station, that in most cases if any UAP is present near a RAF station it is quite likely to be seen and reported.*

*From the information examined: contrary to certain media suggestions that there is some sinister UAP agenda or that there are repeated UAP visits to locations of national importance, no evidence has been found that RAF strategic sites are some sort of target at which UAP appear more often than over certain other areas (eg over highly populated areas or along air corridors). [On the contrary] there is no evidence that regular or irregular repeat visits occur at any RAF site, strategic in nature or otherwise.<sup>1</sup>*

The conclusion of the report states:

*There is, therefore, no firm evidence which points to the repeated presence of UAP at, for example, US or RAF strategic or tactical bases (airfields), Army assets or RAF or Naval HQ or special asserts (in particular, at nuclear assets such as Faslane, Aldermaston, Capenhurst, etc)...*

*The fact that [UFOs] are seen at all, at some service locations, is undoubtedly because they are manned 24 hours a day with staff who are likely to be observant by virtue of their normal tasks.... [my emphasis]<sup>2</sup>*

As Dr. Clarke points out in his blog entry, this data appears to indicate that UFOs have no interest in nuclear technology. Strangely, there is little mention of these findings in the UFO literature or the internet.

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2. *ibid.*

## Marty Kottmeyer's "Trance Mutations: A Catalogue of Nuclear Motifs in the UFO Mythos"

In addition to David Clarke's e-mail, Marty Kottmeyer sent me a lengthy piece with this title that was so large, it would probably fill up three or four issues of SUNlite. It is his listing of all the UFO/nuclear connections he had discovered over the years and contains 367 entries. I think the best way to give a feel for Marty's work is to give his summary of the 367 entries:

### So What Does It All Add Up To?

by Marty Kottmeyer

Let's start with a few banalities. It is fair to say that any collection of books selected at random from the last half of the 20th century would have some material mentioning nuclear themes. Everyone knows the atom bomb and nuclear power. It is however also fair to say that such a random selection would not have a similar amount or range of material. There are obviously some subject domains where we would find very little material. Cookbooks might mention atomic hot sauce and the odd exotic item with a nuclear label, but the material would be rare and trivial. Biographies, romance novels, car manuals, sports histories, astrology guides, to pop off a few subjects, would present a similar challenge to someone searching for cultural saturation of nuclear topics. Some subjects would obviously have more. Modern history works would necessarily mention the nuclear menace. Spy novels routinely invoke nuclear weapon threats and atomic secrets. Works of horror and science fiction present a domain that has an abundance of nuclear-related material.

There seems to be no cognitively absolute necessity for the ufo phenomenon to have an abundance of nuclear-related materials. We can imagine a ufo phenomenon that generated no radiation cases. (#19, #55, #90, #95, #108, #114, #126, #136, #177, #205) The great majority of cases have no evidence of radioactivity or radiation sickness. (#115, #173) We can imagine contacts that never mention the atomic menace. Indeed a small handful of contactees don't mention it. We can imagine abductions without visions of atomic doom. A fair-sized percentage doesn't include them. Remove every case in this catalogue and you would still have a literature on ufos. It would be a lot smaller and lot less impressive with many familiar classics tossed out, but there is nothing unthinkable about it. One might even consider it more thinkable, because it would remove some annoying problems.

For one thing, why should ufos emit radioactivity? According to both contactees and abductees, extraterrestrial saucers are powered by magnetic drives, not atomic ones. Even if the aliens are lying about this and have atomic drives as ufologists used to speculate, thrust would be unlikely to be provided by radiation. It would be too inefficient to generate momentum by the expulsion of



subatomic particles. There are better ways to convert the energy that would never involve radioactivity escaping the craft. Aliens would almost have to consciously regard the earth's atmosphere as a toxic waste dump for radioactive materials. That would contradict stated concerns related by recent abductees that they want us to be environmentally concerned.

The extraordinary consequences of atomic testing predicted by the contactees and abductees never happened and it is fair to assert never could have. Impressive as atomic bombs are, the energy released still is trivial compared to natural phenomena like earthquakes, volcanoes, hurricanes, and ocean tides. If these things do not throw the earth off axis, alter our orbit, endanger the balance of the solar system, why should nuclear weapons? As for the balance of the universe, the sun generates energies literally astronomically greater than anything on earth. If that did not throw things off balance, man should have nothing to worry about.

More, as indicated in the Holzer entry (#183), if aliens were truly worried about the consequences of atomic energy they should have interfered in our development of atomic weaponry. They should have warned people before a dime was spent on it if they could foresee it coming as an advanced race surely should have been able to. If they only arrived because they woke up to our menace with the explosion at Hiroshima (unlikely if there is no monitoring program in place and the nearest worlds in sight uninhabited.), more forceful measures could have been taken. They could have taken or destroyed the weapons. They could have made face-to-face contact with political leaders and laid out the details of the threat. Similarly, as Howe points out (#219), they could have prevented Einstein and scientific types from being born by genetic manipulation, taken them bodily away, messed up their minds, or controlled them. If they possess time travel, as Michael D. Swords for example has suggested, why didn't they eliminate the timeline that brought atomic developments into being?

Some of the contactee and abductee material looks daft from a scientific standpoint. Ashtar says a hydrogen isotope is not an element (#39). Adamski speaks of elements lighter than the atmosphere but heavier than space forming an explosive layer (#68). Only hydrogen and helium come close to that description and they would more probably disperse than form a layer and in any case a hydrogen layer would be quickly ignited by incoming meteors. Raymond Bernard looks for the interior of a hollow earth (#71, #112). Another alien warns that splitting atoms destroys literal worlds, recycling discarded metaphysical chestnuts of an earlier century (#102, #202). They tell us radioactivity resembles dust devils (#103). They tell us the moon can be drawn down to earth by an atmospheric whirlpool (#138). Atoms can be shrunk or expanded – a violation of quantum physics (#151, #162). One says that atomic blasts slow down the Earth's rotation making us lose time and grow older faster. (#179) Herrmann predicts an Eternal Firestorm (#207). Another claims the existence of an unspecified sub-atomic particle that hides from sunlight. (#223). Bodies can be turned into 'anti-matter space' (#234). Atomic energy is the reverse of subatomic energy (#243). And let's not forget that alien race that destroyed itself by the chaining of not just one reactor, but a whole network of reactors (#201).

The notion still beloved by some ufo writers that aliens came here because of atomic tests has resulted in a number of failed predictions. The Project Ivy net caught nothing (#54). Predictions by ufologists like Keyhoe that certain other tests would increase the presence of ufos failed. Explanations that ufos favored appearing in New Mexico (#35) or more generally in the U.S. and Russia (#25) because they were places at the forefront of atomic development crumbled when flaps favored places like France, Italy, and Latin America.<sup>1</sup> A cluster of sightings around Los Alamos excited some interest (#21, #30), but other atomic sites had none and the overwhelming fraction of sightings happened at places devoid of atomic or security interest. Further correlations would be alleged in subsequent years, but the possibilities of selection effects by ufo reporters and investigators always exist as an alternative interpretation to such claims. A more abstract difficulty of the general proposition that ufos overfly nuclear sites to spy on them or sample the environment around them is that an advanced civilization would probably be able to do reconnaissance without any perceptible presence. Nanotechnology and long-string molecule information encoding will eventually exist which will allow infiltration with spy devices having dimensions on the order of insects and maybe even the microscopic. Flying saucers are just too low-tech for a technically advanced spy culture.

Add up all these absurdities, failures, and problems and the ufo phenomenon would be greatly better off if atomic bombs and nuclear power had never become a part of the picture. Yet, there they are. Now, what are you going to do? Ignore them? Though a legal and therapeutic option, maybe this material has some uses. It might be a great way to kill time as you meditate on their meaning. Perhaps it will illustrate some larger thesis. If you feel up to it, let's cogitate a bit.

The saucer menace, for pragmatic purposes, begins in 1947 only a couple years after Hiroshima. We saw several formulations in the catalogue of individuals who thought there might be some psychological connection. To borrow the flip phrasing of one wit, was it all a case of atomic jitters? We saw two psychologists, Strecker and Courts (#11), hit on that diagnosis right on the crest of the first flap in 1947. "Overactive emotional state" is how Strecker put it. One history of the early atom age, Paul Boyer's *By the Bomb's Early Light* (Panther, 1985, chapter 25), gives some evidence that there was some sort of collective equivalent of post-traumatic stress syndrome going on at the time. People were refusing to think of the atomic threat and blotting out reality. Loren Gross has also commented on the fact that papers were filled with stories suggesting a bad case of war nerves had infected the whole world.<sup>2</sup> He felt this and an inchoate need of the mass psyche for escape to a realm where anything was possible, the black depths of outer space contributed to the growing fear and fascination with the ufo phenomenon. "Outer space was escape, and the possibility that ufos might be aliens arriving to assuage mankind's cosmic loneliness had thrilling appeal."<sup>3</sup> I've speculated on the possibility that this might explain why Kenneth Arnold's sighting of superplanes is a seeming acting out of the fears of superplanes expressed by General "Hap" Arnold in the *New York Times*, barely two years earlier, albeit the idea doesn't really work when you try to be rigorous about it.<sup>4</sup> There is some evidence that the periods immediately after wars tend to be fertile times for fearful collective delusions.

Such times however do not last fifty years and would not account for most of the material catalogued. It may account for the genesis of the first saucer flap or two, but it wouldn't account for those extending into the Sixties or Seventies or saucer flaps in places like France or Latin America

Additionally, questions arise about the two year time lag. If Hiroshima was so critical, why didn't the saucer mania start sooner? One might try to fill the gap in with the ghost rocket fascination of 1946, but the obvious objection is that it was based in Scandinavia and did not immediately spread into America, which should have embraced it. There is an obvious reason for America not to worry about it. Transcontinental ballistic missiles were not yet reality and probably would not be a believable threat. One interesting suggestion is that the lag was in part due to the fact that winning the war should have made people happy and less fearful in America for some amount of time. The fears return only when a big mystery arises to re-open the collective fantasy factory. The fantasies go in all directions at first, as indeed happened in the weeks of the first flap, but those of a paranoid cast stay around because paranoids always find or manufacture loose ends to maintain their beliefs. The time of the genesis is thus opportunistic rather than crisis-generated. More would have to be known about the genesis of paranoid delusions in earlier post-war cultures to gauge the plausibility of this scenario.

Menzel's ruminations (#59) about the link between nuclear fear and saucers contradict themselves. At once they are a threat from space hopefully designed to unify mankind and a harmless escape people prefer over thinking about bombs. However it must be said that the general culture manifested this same contradiction. Some did think saucers a threat; some did think them harmless. At the time he was writing, those saying they were harmless predominated. That most people prefer saucers to A-bombs is true enough, but the unstated corollary that this was escapism will not explain our catalogue. The contactees, if anything, magnified this threat by the talk of endangering the balances of the solar system, galaxy, and universe. Ufologists did so as well in their talk of the earth's heeling over, throwing the earth out of orbit, the earth going nova at the next nuclear test. They also warned of radiation generated by the saucers and how they could accidentally trigger atomic war. Contactees contradicted themselves on whether our betters would or had been intervening. The notion that a threat from space would unify man existed long before the saucer phenomenon, most notably there is the 1928 André Maurois story called "The Next Chapter: The War Against the Moon," wherein Earth scientists fake a threat from the Moon to unify the world. Science fiction writer Fritz Leiber satirized the absurdity of the notion in 1945. Contactees tended to portray aliens as paternalistic. They might be scolding, but they were not a threat. I have heard it expressed that we should pretend we are being invaded to lead man into unity, but that seems a minority, nearly idiosyncratic, viewpoint and has never existed in numbers to fuel saucer belief. Menzel never expressed these ideas in his later books and writings, probably out of disinterest.

Jung's beliefs about the ufo phenomenon did not enter our catalogue. Though he does describe the atomic motifs of the ufo rumor, he didn't focus analytical attention to them. He speaks of the emotional tensions of a world suffering the strains of Russian policies and the collective distress forming a psychic need. He writes, "The present world situation is calculated as never before to arouse expectations of a redeeming supernatural event." He also remarks, "Nuclear physics has begotten in the layman's head an uncertainty of judgement that far exceeds that of the physicists and makes things appear possible which but a short while ago would have been declared impossible." This line was true, but also a banality. The big idea that Jung is generally cited for was his tentative notion that flying saucers, because they are round, might be mandalas and thus symbols of order.

The Cold War is now over. Russia no longer is felt a threat to the freedom of the world. Ufo rumors still continue and excite continuing obsession and paranoia. Additionally, as noted earlier, ufo flaps have happened in countries that did not directly experience the tensions of the Cold War: France, Italy, Spain, Latin America. At best, then, tensions only started the rumor complex. It did not sustain it.<sup>5</sup> Ufos do fit conventional notions of supernatural events, but the adjective "redeeming" is unsupported by the contents of the myth as indeed Jung notices. "These expectations have not dared to show themselves." He blames the modern rationalistic mind and a non-genuine Christian belief. The adjective was obliged because mandalas express order, deliverance, salvation, and wholeness and Jung was lured by their roundness to this identification. More probably he guessed wrong

Jung had no way to know that the saucer-image was not molded by the unconscious, but by language. A journalistic error created the phrase "flying saucer" and reports of round crafts ended up corroborating a case that truly involved a heel-shaped craft.<sup>6</sup> The fact that studies repeatedly show the dominant emotions in ufo cases involve fear rather than tranquility or a sense of integration decisively refute Jung's guess. Experience shows people spontaneously draw mandalas when they are beginning to emerge from a period of madness and fragmented self. Drawing them is accompanied by a sense of tranquility and integration, not fear. That is why they are referred to as symbols of order and wholeness in the first place. Since the image wasn't being spontaneously thrown up by the unconscious, but involved a linguistic formulation being imposed on the perception of the external environment; there was no reason for redemptive themes to be associatively expressed. Blaming the modern rational mind and non-genuine religiosity was an understandable way to ad hoc scapegoat the non-evidence and preserve his explanation of the saucer's roundness, but it no longer looks necessary.

Probably feeling obliged to guess about the saucer myth; Edward Ruppelt (#80) thought ufo belief might be related to a seeking of salvation from space. The atom bomb instilled a sense of hopelessness, but the aliens are older and wiser so there may be hope after all. This is true enough of the contactees and that may be all Ruppelt intended to explain. The quest for hope, perhaps needless to say, would not explain much else about the ufo phenomenon. Abduction lore seems more geared to instilling hopelessness than relieving it. Nor would it explain sightings. On this premise we should have seen a great increase in sightings and contact claims at

the times of the Cuban missile crisis and the fallout shelter hysteria of the early Sixties. This is not to dismiss Ruppelt, but to say the idea cannot be extended beyond a small domain.

Joost Meerloo's thoughts about saucers (#142) as "mass delusional escape" and a cover-up of alienation and panic over atomic suicide are subject to the same objections offered against Menzel. Contactee accounts magnified those fears.

Andrew Gordon (#196) similarly proposes that saucer belief was "a by-product of the fears of nuclear holocaust." Says he, "It is reassuring, perhaps, to conceive of a power which dwarfs even the The Bomb." This sounds lunatic on first reading, and, I suspect, was an uncompleted thought; to wit, a power exists which could over-power The Bomb. As with Ruppelt's view, it might work if one limits the idea to the contactees, but abduction cases and sightings involving fearful witnesses don't give the impression of reassurance.

Brad Steiger's thoughts on contactees (#232) possibly using aliens as puppet projections to voice protest over the hideous situation man has got himself into with atomic weapons and environmental pollution was archly worded, but seems to get things exactly right. It is easily reinforced with Christy Dennis's confession (#209) of her conscious strategy to express such fears in an authoritative voice. The paternalistic tone of the warnings certainly fits this idea. The elaboration of the threat to include the whole earth, the galaxy, and even the universe fits well a common pattern of mental mirroring of one's inner world onto the totality of the outer world. For example, paranoids tend to project their fears first on one person, then a group that grows larger and larger until there is an international conspiracy.

In saying contactees are a species of crude artists; Richard Hall independently backs up John Rimmer's impression that the creative impulse is involved in various aspects of the ufo mythos (#184). This formulation actually applies more powerfully to the abductee mythos for there is plentiful evidence that many abductees are explicitly known to be artists or otherwise imbued with the creative impulse.

Robert Lifton's observations about visitors from outer space films (#140) as an attempt to master nuclear anxiety by visualizing the radical impairment of balance in an exaggerated mocking fantasy has plausibility and could be extended to the realm of ufo mythology with no loss of credibility. It would also seem consistent with the ideas of Weart discussed below.

One observation I can offer about the material in this catalogue is that there is a cultural dimension evident in how the themes of the nuclear fears have changed over time. They mimic in their own way the pattern of changes chronicled in Spencer Weart's definitive *Nuclear Fear – A History of Images* (Harvard University Press, 1988). In the Fifties the dominant fear was The Bomb, its raw destructiveness and the potential to make life extinct through the effects of fallout. Kenneth Arnold feared this (#1). So, too, did nearly every contactee (#7, #12, #18, #30, #37, #44, #56, #61, #64, #67, #68, #69, #77, #78, #79, #87, #92, #93, #96, #97, #100, #101, #102, #103, #104, #106, #107, #109, #110, #112, #113, #118, #125, #128, #133, #137, #138, #139, #142, #148, #150, #153, #163, #164, #167, #171, #179, #180, #181, #188, #189, #219, #222, #229, #230, #231, #235, #244, #254, #255, #270, #271, #273, and #310). Most ufologists did as well. (#25, #28, #29, #57, #62, #72, #76, #81, #83, #124, #132, #144, #165) Fallout fears get transmuted into saucer radiation beliefs. The testing of cars, as in the cases of Mildred Wenzel, Betty Hill, and David Stephens seem curious echoes of the notorious Seattle Windshield Pitting Epidemic when people feared windshield pockmarks were related to atomic testing.

Wargasm, the fear of accidental nuclear war, becomes dominant in the early Sixties and sees reflection in George Fawcett's warning that saucers could trigger it. (#130, #144) Fear of nuclear reactors arises to prominence in the mid-Sixties and is quickly reflected in the Exeter flap (#124). This fear continues into the Seventies and is most wildly reflected in The Janos People story (#201). The Reagan era resurgence of nuclear war fears has an obvious echo in William Herrman's jeremiad "Inevitable Destruction" predicting an Eternal Firestorm (#206) and Jenny Randles' global precognition of Armageddon (#208). Increasing fears of nuclear waste become echoed in the cases of the 1977 Glon TV broadcast, Judy Doraty, Donn Shallcross, Kim Carlsberg, and in George Andrews's advice to rocket nuclear waste into impending supernovae (#190, #203, #210, #222, #231, #260, #264, #269, #270, #285). Environmentalist activist protests about plutonium in satellites are paralleled in William Cooper's fantasy about Jupiter being ignited by a plutonium-fueled satellite and Rux's NASA conspiracy of silence, backdated to Apollo, on their use of nuclear energy. (#237, #284)

Katharina Wilson's 1991 alien vision of an underground ocean killed by three ancient nuclear power plants and people covering up this travesty both literally and figuratively seems to combine nuclear waste fear with a string of revelations of government cover-ups of early nuclear experimentation on humans. (#251). Similarly Nick Redfern's rewrite of Roswell as a hidden scandal involving atomic bomb test using Japanese bodies clearly echoes these revelations. (#338, #361) Linda Porter's secretly developed space poison evokes the cover-up revelations theme while mixing in Star Wars particle beam developments for added flavor. (#250) Patricia Cori's suggestion that the media avoids the subject of Hiroshima and its morality also has a bizarre conspiratorial air to it. (#314) Abductee Brian Scott backdates alien revelations about a nuclear waste cover-up into his 2002 memoir. (#323) Chernobyl puts in a few appearances. (#228, #274, #355) Fears about nuclear weaponry escaping the Soviet Union upon its breakup get echoed in the Carp case and Nick Pope's suitcase bomb ruminations (#237, #282). The fake intelligence that Saddam Hussein was developing nuclear weapons that eventually spawned the Iraq War was refluxed by Jeanne Marie Robinson's Visitors. (#250) Concerns spearheaded by Carl Sagan that nuclear exchanges could trigger nuclear winter eventually are re-expressed and magnified in Marcia Schafer's experiences. (#324)

Weart's book is highly impressive in its psychological analysis of the culture of nuclear fears and I unhesitatingly recommend it as the starting place and possibly the finish line in the attempt to understand the material in this catalogue. He has a discussion of the UFO phenomenon that is brief, about 3 pages, but is straight to the point. Aliens taught contactees to surmount the fear of



death and move to an advanced and peaceful utopia. "Many of the reports resembled paranoid transmutational fantasies. Movies and widely read books conveyed a preoccupation with secrecy and with superior beings at once menacing and benign, who sometimes immobilized and wrought bodily changes on their favorite victims, and who conveyed redemptive messages of cosmic importance...The UFO theme plainly addressed anxiety about all modern technology." By the 1970s, people added environmental perils that included nuclear reactors. "Meanwhile leaders of the UFO movements bitterly attacked the scientific establishment who found the messages worthless." He quotes Robert Sheaffer's assessment that it was fundamentally a reaction against science and reason, but adds it was more:

*"The UFO phenomenon was a rare historical event: the emergence of a major popular symbol. A host of seemingly ordinary people had worked a creative act, inventing a new representation for the dangers and hopes of personal and social transmutation, a new myth peculiarly appropriate for the modern age. This myth had originated in close connection with nuclear fear, and carried an implicit response. Awesome modern technology, said the UFO stories, must be accompanied by a full-scale transmutation of civilization and everyone within it."*

This has the ring of truth to it. Abductees and contactees alike are very much about transmutation of the individual and society. Ken Ring's Omega Project independently confirms that people are changed by their ufo experiences.<sup>8</sup> That the ufo myth is a "a creative act" is of course reinforced by the significant number of artists among abductees and other participants in the ufo myth. As Joseph Campbell often said, artists are the mythmakers of a culture.

Weart's work documents well the amount of material that science fiction writers have offered up bearing on nuclear themes, even long before the development of The Bomb. He demonstrates the symbolic power The Atom wields and notes its deep meaning in the explosion of inner forces within the individual. This clearly has interpretive support in the preponderance of apocalyptic imagery in all ufo culture.<sup>9</sup>

Another observation worth making is that film fiction dealing with the ufo phenomenon and aliens, particularly when in a clearly paranoid mode, shows an abundance of nuclear motifs and shows a similar creativity. Curiously, the culture tracking of the pattern of changing nuclear fears is slightly less impressive than ufo literature, but is still discernable. Standard film psychology would suggest the films are a way to abreact societal tensions. As in a nightmare, there is a degree of distortion in the presentation of the menace and an effort is made to master the fear in the fictional universe parallel to trying to deal with its real-world counter-part. Could the 'real' ufo myth serve an analogous purpose? (see Appendix)

With that left unanswered, I end this quest for meaning. There rarely is any final word in matters of myth and I can only express a hope that others will explore this question more successfully in the future.

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# UFO REPORT DATABASES: PANACEA OR ALBATROSS?

When discussing the efforts of the Canadian UFO survey over the past twenty-five years, Chris Rutkowski wrote:

*Regardless of one's belief in the "reality" of UFOs (however that may be construed), studies such as ours affirm that there is a persistent phenomenon that deserves further scientific study. If UFOs are not "real," then why are tens of thousands of Canadians (and others worldwide) seeing unusual objects in the sky? Is there a need for better education of the masses? If there is a residual percentage of truly unexplained cases, what do these represent? Alien visitation? Clandestine military exercises? A hitherto unrecognized natural atmospheric phenomenon?*<sup>1</sup>

In my opinion, Rutkowski's claim that these objects are "unusual" is another instance of UFOlogists not understanding the fact that these are reports made by witnesses who are reporting what they perceived and may not be a true reflection of what they actually saw. It is the witness who often introduces the "unusual" part of the UFO report which can turn an Identified Flying Object (IFO) into an Unidentified Flying Object (UFO) that can not be explained.

## Is 94% good enough?

Chris Rutkowski recently published an article describing how he examined Ted Molczan's database for re-entries that were visible from Canada and compared them to the twenty-five year history of the Canadian UFO survey. His results seem to confirm that UFOlogists, in Canada, were right in identifying the possible source of the sighting (many of them appeared to be classified as a fireball but that is splitting hairs) a significant majority of the time. While I am impressed by this success, I think it is important to examine the 6% of the cases that the survey did not identify as reports of re-entering space debris.

The first report occurred during the Cosmos 2096 re-entry, which was visible from the northern tier of states in the central United States. Apparently, it was also visible in the lower provinces of Canada. The unidentified report was from Portage la Prairie, Manitoba about sixty miles north of the US border. The source of this report was from the UFO database of Manitoba and was listed as follows<sup>2</sup>:

date	time	location	type	Duration	color	shape	witnesses	strangeness	reliability	Source	classification	description
8/23/90	2140	Portage la Prairie, MB	nl	300	multi	ps	2	5	8	UFOROM	U	pilots saw lights on parallel course; no a/c in area

Rutkowski then describes why it was listed as "unidentified":

*It was classified as Unknown because the witness was a reliable observer. However, the witness only reported "lights," so no structured object was described.*<sup>3</sup>

Rutkowski gives no other reason to explain why this was listed as "unidentified". The time of observation and re-entry match. The description even appears to match. He saw lights flying in a parallel course. This sounds like a description of a re-entry that broke up. In my opinion, justifying the classification because the observer was "reliable" is a mistake often used by UFOlogists. The history of UFO reports has shown that there is no such thing as "a reliable observer" based on occupation. It appears that the classifier got this report wrong.

The next report was associated with the Russian Astra satellite re-entry on April 14, 1996. Again, the re-entry was visible from the northern tier of the mid-western United States. It also appeared to be visible from Quebec because at the same time the re-entry occurred there were four reports from Quebec. Rutkowski lists two entries that were listed as "unidentified" and "insufficient information":<sup>4</sup>

date	time	location	type	Duration	color	shape	witnesses	strangeness	reliability	Source	classification	description
4/14/96	0300	Nouvelle, PQ	nl		Yellow	cigar				SOS OVNI	U	object w/4 large lights; 'big as a trailer'

4/14/96	0315	Captan, PQ	C1		round					SOS OVNI	I	obj. stopped over road; then took off; within 100 feet
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Rutkowski explains the classifications:

*The report listed as "Unknown" is curious because it has descriptors unlike a re-entry. The sighting at 0315 hours local was noted as a "Close Encounter," yet in time and location matches the re-entry.<sup>5</sup>*

Both of these observations seem to match the time of the re-entry. One has to consider the possibility that they may have been observations that were distorted by the witnesses.

The Insufficient information report involved the witness saying it stopped over the road and then took off. They also gave an altitude of 100 feet. This is similar to some observation errors often seen in fireball and re-entry reports. Witnesses often misjudge the distances involved and interpret the object to be relatively close when it was really very far away. I agree that it is "insufficient information" since the report does not include enough data to draw an adequate conclusion but there is the possibility that this might have been a re-entry.

The "unidentified" sighting from this field is the one I found most interesting. It is the classic description of a re-entry straight from the Zond IV incident. A "yellow cigar" with "four large lights", which was "big as a trailer". The airship/excitedness effects appear to have taken hold in this description. Despite these apparent clues, Rutkowski states that it has a description that is "unlike a re-entry". Like the Yukon case, he appears to ignore the lessons from the past regarding how some re-entries can be reported as UFOs.

The last "unidentified" is a case from 2004, where the witnesses reported seeing three lights going west five minutes after seeing a bright fireball.<sup>6</sup>

date	time	location	type	Duration	color	shape	witnesses	strangeness	reliability	Source	classification	description
6/26/04	2240	Windsor, ON	nl	30	red	ps	3	4	6	HBCCUFO	U	3 small lights going W, seen 5 mins. after bright fireball

This appears to indicate that their "three lights" going west had nothing to do with the re-entry. One wonders if the witness might have gotten their directions and times wrong. Maybe there was a bright meteor prior to the re-entry. We don't know for sure. One could easily classify this as "insufficient information".

It is admirable that the Canadian UFO survey got a score of 94 % for identifying the cases in the re-entry database. Yet, in 6% of the observations, the UFOlogists were unable to identify the likely stimulus because of preconceived notions about how these events should be reported and the "reliability" of the witness. Did this inability to properly identify the source 100% of the time indicate that there are other cases in the database classified as "unidentified", which can be explained?

### Unidentified ≠ Unexplainable

Back in SUNlite 5-4 (p. 16-18), I pointed out how the 2012 survey got some of their classifications wrong. In one instance, it appears that ten reports were not identified as a venting booster rocket used to launch NROL-25 from Vandenberg AFB. Six of these were classified as "unidentified" and four were listed as "insufficient information". One would think the cluster of sightings might have caused the classifier to make a check if there might be a known source. Like the recent Trident missile launch off the California coast, UFOlogists dropped the ball and performed no investigation/check to see if there might have been a source that produced these reports.

If one thinks this is an isolated incident, I took a look at some of the different survey's over the last few years and could point to other "unidentifieds" in these lists that probably have explanations. It is not unusual for UFO databases to contain IFOs masquerading as UFOs. It is also not unusual for some of these databases to contain a certain percentage of cases that do not appear credible but



are listed anyway.

## Mythomanes?

In the 2013 survey, I noticed four “unidentifieds” that involved some rather bizarre descriptions. One witness, on February 3rd, mentioned seeing a 3-foot high alien in the hospital:

*I saw tranparen entity at a hospital. This being clearly had a cloaking device of some sort as it could not allways hide it's eyes. One it noticed it's eyes could been seen slightly it would quickly hide them . This being was about 3ft tall. It was there to study so a science collector of sorts. I am not the only that saw this.<sup>7</sup>*

Another case involved an individual, who woke up in the middle of the night on July 16, to see an orb in his room.<sup>8</sup> The witness states he is now so scared he sleeps in his car. A third case, on June 9th, involved a rather disturbing account of an alien abduction claim.<sup>9</sup> The fourth case, on June 5th, comes from a database that is not public.<sup>10</sup> These reports, by themselves, seem difficult to believe without any supporting evidence. In my opinion, putting them into the “unidentified” category gives them credibility they do not deserve. At best, these should be considered “insufficient information”. At worst, the possibility exists that these might be reports made by people with mental problems or are hoaxes.

This makes me wonder how many reports in the survey(s) are made by individuals wanting attention or having possible psychological issues. I am sure it is a small percentage but there seems to be the possibility that some of these reports might originate from such sources. What effort, if any, is expended to quarantine such reports from the rest of the survey? If there is none, then one begins to wonder if the database might contain more suspect reports being classified as “unidentifieds”.

## Lather, rinse, repeat....

Anybody can collect UFO reports the way kids collect baseball cards or comic books. One can even produce statistics about these reports that appear to demonstrate that there is something unique about the “unidentifieds”. However, UFOlogists have been collecting these reports for many decades and appear to still have problems filtering out the IFOs and poor quality reports.

The ultimate goal of a UFO database should be to weed out all the IFOs so one can focus only on the “true” UFOs. I found it interesting that the 6% failure rate in the re-entry cases is in the ballpark range of the 10% often cited as percentage of unknowns found in many UFO databases (the Canadian survey quotes an average value of 13% of 25 years). It is not that big of a stretch to suggest that one of the major reasons that UFOlogists/skeptics can't identify every case is because the witnesses tend to distort the observations to the point an identification can not be made. This human element makes the effort of collecting and evaluating reports a flawed exercise.

The repetition of this program over the decades demonstrates that UFOlogists are not really learning anything new. UFOlogists need to divorce themselves from the idea that presenting a listing of enigmas as an argument is not the same thing as producing verifiable evidence that can not be refuted. Instead of grabbing headlines, UFOlogists should be attempting new ways to grab the evidence that can be analyzed without the potential for human error.

## Notes and references

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10. *ibid.*

## AZIMUTH AND ELEVATION ACCURACY TESTS

While looking at the meteor plots from the American Meteor Society, I noticed something that is sometimes not understood by UFOlogists. There are a certain percentage of these reports where the witnesses were disoriented and gave incorrect directions and observations. It seems likely that if fireball reports have incorrect azimuth/elevations, then UFO reports probably contain similar inaccuracies. I felt the best way to get a feel for how accurate azimuth and elevation estimates can be, I chose to run some tests using the most accurate observers I know, amateur astronomers.

Because of my schedule and vacation, it was hard for me to get out when a large group of astronomers were present this summer. However, I did manage to test a half-dozen observers to see how well they were at estimating the azimuths and elevations of stars. The results of these tests were a small sample but I did manage to collect some observations made by observers with different experience levels (levels 1-3 with 1 being a beginner and 3 being experienced).

Observer	Experience level	Average azimuth difference	Average elevation difference
1	1	14	5
2	2	14	7
3	2	7	5
4	3	11	7
5	3	8	5
6	3	6	3

It must be pointed out that these observations were made under ideal conditions, where the observers knew the location of true north and took their time to make the estimates on, essentially, stationary objects.

While I realize this is a limited sample, one can suggest that even experienced observers are going to be off in azimuth and elevation by 5-10 degrees. In the future, I hope to get some additional samples from more amateur astronomers and try to include some non-amateur astronomers as well. It may have to wait until next summer since the cold weather limits my astronomy adventures. Stay tuned.



# AIRPLANE CONTRAILS AND UFOS

Over the years, I have noticed a trend that airplane contrails create UFO reports near the equinox. In March-April and September-October, there are often videos showing aircraft contrails brightly lit with the assumption that they are strange objects not seen before by the witness. Why is it near the equinox that these become popular? There appears to be an explanation and it has a lot to do with the sun's azimuth when it sets.

## Sunrise, Sunset

Near the equinox, the sun sets, and rises, at the West or East cardinal point. It does not matter what latitude one is located or what hemisphere. This condition tends to produce interesting results for observers, who watch the sky shortly before and after sunset.

## Air corridors

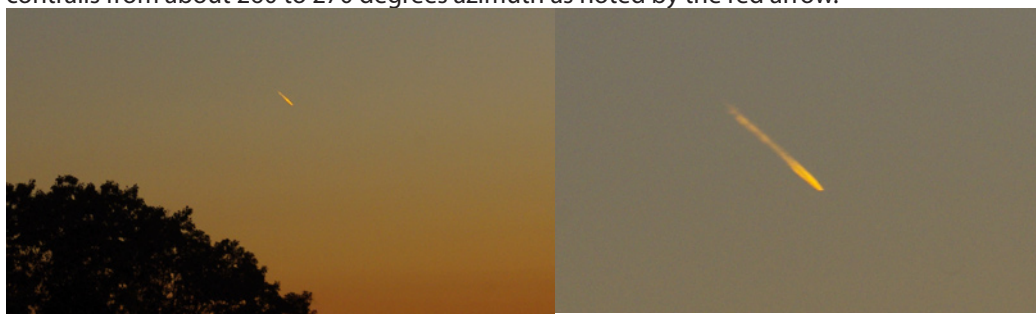
Aircraft tend to travel along chosen paths when making long flights across country. These air routes tend to be in a general east-west direction. Is it any surprise that, if there is a high altitude air route to the west of the observer, that the contrails being created would be brilliantly lit for the observer.

## Observations

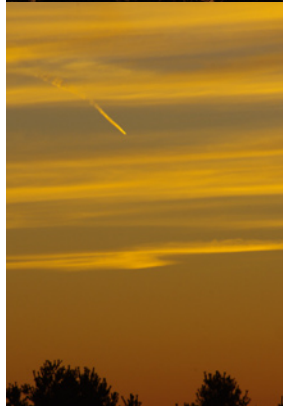
I decided to try seeing if I could spot this effect during September and October of this year. From Manchester, there is an air corridor that runs from Nashua to north of Albany, New York. As a result, these western flying aircraft would be heading towards the sun.



This image of a flight from Boston to Phoenix shows a typical route. As result, aircraft near Albany (roughly 115 miles west of me) that are at 30,000 - 35,000 feet would appear roughly a few degrees above my western horizon. The path indicates, I should see contrails from about 260 to 270 degrees azimuth as noted by the red arrow.



As I watched on clear evenings, I did notice a trend. I started my observations on the 2nd but saw no contrails. It was not until the 8th of September, I began to see aircraft on westerly courses leaving contrails illuminated by the sun. These images to the left show the contrail as imaged with an 70mm lens and with a 300mm lens.



By the 14th, contrails in the west were becoming frequently seen and took on some interesting shapes/features as upper level winds shifted their appearance (see image to the left). There were also contrails in pairs (see image on the next page). These aircraft were many miles apart but, because of the distance they were being seen from and the perspective, they appeared quite close. On other dates, I used a 2700mm focal length telescope to image some contrails. The other two images on the next page show some close-ups. Note that the aircraft still are not clearly seen in either of them. That is because the planes are hidden behind the exhaust. Only when the contrail is observed as it was heading perpendicular to the observer can the plane be seen. Depending on the distance from the observer, the aircraft may, or may not, be visible.





### UFO reports and contrails

People have been confused by contrails for decades. This clipping from the San Mateo Times<sup>1</sup>, demonstrates that people were confusing contrails for “flying saucers” for quite some time. In this case it was a B-50 at high altitude. However, With the arrival of jet airliners in the late 1950s and early 1960s, contrails became more frequent as more aircraft began flying at higher altitudes.

While some people may find it absurd that contrails could be confused for UFOs, they obviously have not been paying attention to many UFO proponents and videos posted on the internet. In November 2010, an airplane contrail was confused for a missile launch. A few weeks later, Dan Aykroyd, who is associated with MUFON, appeared on Jimmie Kimmel and stated that it was a UFO/orb that created the contrail. The explanation was highly publicized but people still did not want to accept the explanation.<sup>2</sup>

I mentioned another incident of contrails mistaken for UFOs in SUNlite 5-6<sup>3</sup>. On September 8th, a witness in Norfolk, Virginia recorded two “UFOs” that became something of a sensation. These were just contrails lit by the setting sun but UFO proponents tried to make them into something they were not.

Mick West has quite the web site devoted to contrails, which includes an entry about contrails and UFO reports.<sup>4</sup> He even identified a photograph<sup>5</sup> that was promoted as an “unidentified” in the 2010 Canadian UFO survey<sup>6</sup> as nothing more than a contrail.

While contrails do not produce a lot of UFO reports, they are something that need to be considered for UFO reports around sunset/sunrise. It appears that they occur more frequently around the equinox but can occur at any time of the year.

#### Vapor Trails Get Many Excited

Vapor trails formed by condensation of aircraft engines in cold or freezing temperatures put Peninsula residents in a tizzy late yesterday afternoon.

Ordinarily white, the vapor trails were scarlet and gold from the setting sun.

Police departments from San Jose to South San Francisco were flooded with calls between 5:15 and 6:25 with reports ranging from “a burning plane” and “meteors” to “flying saucers.” However, it was only a B-50 bomber flying at 35,000.

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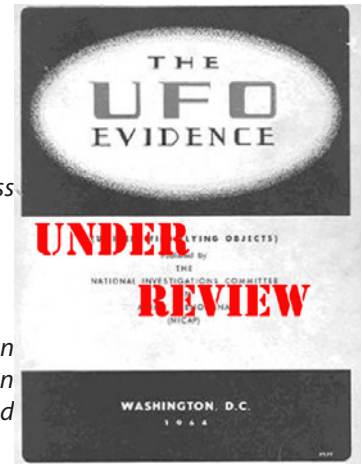
## October 3 1962

The UFO evidence lists this case as follows (p. 140)<sup>1</sup>:

*October 3, 1962--Chicago, Ill. City of Chicago official watched circular UFO with dome move across lower half of moon. [VII]*

Section VII adds a bit more<sup>2</sup>:

*October 3, 1962 - 9:25 p.m. Chicago, Illinois While watching for the Echo satellite, McAley and his son saw a domed disc cross the face of the moon traveling in a westerly direction! The object, tilted at an angle, "seemed to be floating." It appeared to be a small fraction of the apparent size of the moon and gave the impression of being far out in space.* <sup>[43]</sup>



The footnote tells us this came from a report filed with NICAP by Patrick McAley, who was an official associated department of weights and measures. This case sounds impressive but I wonder if NICAP really bothered to look closely at this case.

### Examining the details and possible sources of this report

The first thing I wanted to do with this case is look at where the Moon was located in the sky. Imagine my surprise that the moon was setting at the time of this observation. Assuming the witness may have been in error and saw the event ten to twenty minutes sooner than the reported time, the moon was still only a few degrees above the WSW horizon. Did the witnesses have a flat and clear horizon so they could see the moon at such a low elevation angle? Apparently, NICAP did not bother itself with looking into such details.



Was it possible that weather conditions may have played a role? Weather observations filed indicated the sky was broken and scattered during this time period.<sup>3</sup> It was not perfectly clear and one wonders if the atmosphere might have affected the witness' observation of the moon. I took this image of the moon rising over the ocean. With the naked eye, the moon appeared strange as its shape became distorted as it rose. A setting moon would have exhibited similar characteristics. Is it possible that what Mr. McAley saw was a distortion of the moon as it set? Is it possible that some small clouds passing in front of the moon at the time gave the impression of a "domed disc" passing in front of the moon?

The location also made me wonder if the witness' were looking in the direction of an airport. We are left without an exact location. Midway and O'Hare airports are to the west of Chicago. Did the witnesses simply see an airplane from an odd angle as it passed in front of the moon? The witness admitted that the object was small compared to the moon's size so it could only have been a few minutes of arc across. Resolving the "dome" on this object would have been difficult without optical aid. This photograph I took of an airplane passing close to the moon was shot with a 300mm telephoto lens. It shows the difficulty in seeing fine details of this kind.

### Another case of padding the database?

I really don't consider this case that impressive and there seems to be plenty of reasons to suggest the witness saw something more mundane. Besides atmospheric phenomena or an airplane, it could have been just about anything airborne (balloon, kite, bird, etc.). Because the witness was some public official, NICAP seemed to think it made their document appear credible to the reader, who is not aware of the inaccurate claim of "reliable/expert" observers based on occupation.

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# 701 club

## Case 8549 : September 15, 1963

Don Berliner describes this case as:

*Sept. 15, 1963; Vandalia, Ohio. 66 p.m. Witness: Mrs. F.E. Roush. Two very bright gold objects--one shaped like a banana and the other like an ear of corn--one remained stationary, the other moved from west to north during 10 minutes,<sup>1</sup>*

This doesn't sound like a very exotic case. An examination of the Blue Book file might present additionally information.

### Blue Book's file

The Blue Book file contains just seven pages. These are the completed pages of the standard UFO report form used by the USAF that was filled out by FTD duty officer Captain De Leon, who was talking to the witness on the phone.<sup>2</sup> There was no other investigation or follow-up. Because this report was not directly filled out by the witness, there seems to have been some errors. According to the form, the witness reported that they saw the UFOs at 6:00 PM EST just after sunset. However, sunset did not occur until 6:45 PM CST. Based on what the report states, one has to assume that the event occurred shortly after sunset.

From the form we get the following information<sup>3</sup>:

- The event lasted about 10 minutes
- The objects were golden color and appeared as bright as the sun just before setting. It was not so bright that one could not observe it without discomfort.
- One, or both, of the UFOs appeared to stand still initially.
- Both objects faded quickly but at different times
- The objects appeared to be the shapes of a large banana and a large ear of corn.
- There was no exhaust or vapor trails.
- The banana-like object changed shape with time.
- The ear of corn like object was short-lived.
- The objects distance was estimated to be at least 15 miles away.
- The witness was on their porch balcony facing west.
- The witness did not use any optical aid. All observations were with the naked eye.
- The ear of corn object was only visible in the west.
- The banana like object went from due west to due north.
- The angle of elevation estimates are confusing. The witness did not mark it except with a statement of "Evening star" and arrow towards the 30 degree elevation.
- The objects were initially close to each other and standing still.
- These objects appeared in the region of sky above the area where the sun had set.
- Their paths crossed as they accelerated.
- Then the "ear of corn" faded from view.
- The "banana" moved north.

At this point one can not conclusively state what the witness saw but there is reason to speculate about the source of their sighting.

### Potential source

The key to this sighting appears to be the time of day and direction of the sighting. It appears that the objects observed were being illuminated by the setting sun. In this issue of SUNlite, I describe my observations of airplane contrails after sunset during the Autumnal equinox. September 15th is only eight days short of the equinox and the sun was well positioned to illuminate airplane contrails. Airplane contrails can appear like an "ear of corn" and a "banana" depending on the direction one is viewing the event from.

Of course, the witness stated that they did not observe any vapor trails or exhaust. This implies they were familiar with such phenomena. However, there are recent examples of people reporting contrails at sunset as UFOs and there is no reason to suspect the witness was familiar to seeing contrails under such conditions. It is most important to note that this was 1963. Jetliner air travel was something new to ground observers. The first Boeing 707s and DC-8s did not become operational until 1958-1959. Many of

the travel brochures for the various airlines made sure to highlight the fact that a jet was being flown. Jets could fly at high altitudes compared to the lower altitudes used by propeller driven aircraft in the early and mid- 1950s. Their high altitude and jet exhaust brought something new to observers on the ground. A distant aircraft flying at high altitudes may not be visible but its contrail could be, which gave the impression that the contrail itself was an actual object.

Looking at some of the airline tables from the time period we see some of the scheduled non-stop flights that might have been involved as the “ear of corn” (all times are local time)\*:

Flight	Depart time	Departure	Destination time	Destination
American flt 75	5:40 PM	Washington	7:40 PM	Los Angeles
American flt 61	6:15 PM	Philadelphia	8:20 PM	Los Angeles
American flt 5	4:40 PM	New York	7:15 PM	Los Angeles
TWA flt 11	4:30 PM	New York	6:55 PM	Los Angeles
TWA flt 65	5:00 PM	Boston	7:25 PM	Los Angeles
United flt 805	4:00 PM	New York	6:40 PM	SF/Oakland
United flt 97	6:00 PM	New York	8:30 PM	Los Angeles
United flt 815	5:30 PM	Washington	7:40 PM	Los Angeles
United flt 809	6:00 PM	Washington	8:25 PM	SF/Oakland

It is harder to determine what the northbound flight was. Several of the airlines flew jets into the Detroit/Windsor, Canada from southern locations like Mexico and New Orleans or central locations like St. Louis. It also could have been a military jet. There is no reason to suspect it was anything but an airplane contrail because it behaved exactly like one would expect from an aircraft at high altitude.

### Blue Book’s lack of effort

I am not sure where this case rated in Blue Book’s priorities but the file seems to indicate that nobody bothered to look into this case at all. No effort appears to have been expended to collect data regarding air activity in the area. Was this simply a case of the Blue Book staff just not being interested? It may have been a case of the staff recognizing that the case had no publicity and, as a result, it was best to ignore it. Whatever the reason, Blue Book probably could have solved this one if they made a modest effort to identify the air traffic that evening. Because of their lackadaisical attitude, it ended up in the “unknowns” pile.

### Solved?

While one can not positively identify the source of the reported UFOs, there is no reason to suspect they were anything other than airplane contrails. This report should be reclassified as probable airplane contrails.

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# UFOs on the tube

## The Unexplained files: Are aliens attacking our nuclear arsenal?

After last issue's article on this subject, I was intrigued to see what this show was going to present. Nick Pope was the star as he promoted a lot of stories that were either made up or were distortions of what really happened.

The show began with the infamous Oscar flight incident for which there is not one iota of real evidence other than the statements of Robert Salas. Salas tried to make it appear like a historical event by reading from the report about Echo flight. While reading from that document, he chose to leave out key facts that indicated that this event could be explained. Is Salas engaging in a cover-up by misrepresenting this document?

In the Rendlesham portion of the program, the Orford Ness lighthouse was never mentioned. Instead, we are told that the light in the field observed by Halt, which was the lighthouse, split into three craft. Two went north and one went south. Informed readers know that these objects did not appear until much later and that Halt probably was just looking at stars. The motion and shapes he reported seeing were probably produced from the auto kinetic effect and the optics of his night vision scope.

Sgt. Nevels appeared and claimed to have investigated the weapons area after the event. He reports discovering a hole that had been burned into the nuclear weapons bunker by a laser, which could have set off the nuclear weapon(s) inside. This is a bunch of nonsense because these weapons are never armed until ready for use. Nevels continued to exaggerate when he stated that his radiac had been "pegged" by the radiation levels. The tape states otherwise. At this point, just about anything Nevels stated could not be considered to be an accurate recollection of what occurred.

After entertaining us with the Rendlesham exaggerations, we were then treated to the story about a Russian ICBM site that was "attacked" by a UFO. On October 4, 1982, a UFO supposedly set the ICBMs into a launch mode. According to Paul Stonehill, these missiles were targeted towards the United States and would have set off World War III. Not mentioned was the fact that these were not ICBMs. According to Joel Carpenter, they were just IRBMs, which means they were targeted towards Europe and not the United States. If Stonehill can't get these facts right, how can one trust him to present other facts correctly? This event is nothing more than unconfirmed stories and there could have been quite a few items that could have accidentally affected ICBMs other than a UFO. Any complex system that relies on electronics can suffer from faults that can produce erroneous events. This probably was just an electrical anomaly like the Echo flight shutdown.

In a rather bizarre turn, we were then treated to General Yermenko stating that they staged conventional and nuclear weapons at a remote location. The UFOs came from all locations to monitor this activity every time the weapons were taken out of storage. Why would taking them out of their bunkers matter? The UFOs have the technology to monitor weapons in hardened silos if we are to believe Salas. This is just another "UFO story" that can not be verified.

As the show ends, Steve Bassett repeated his claim that there is a UFO cover-up and that our chances in a fight with the UFOs are "zero". Pope would add that we risk peril if we continue to ignore UFOs. Is this a call that the people of earth should develop new weapons to fight UFOs or just more hyperbole by somebody trying to profit from making such statements? I am sure Mr. Pope will get plenty of more acting opportunities in the future.

The program was awful. It offered nothing new and many of the stories appear to be made up by the witnesses. I wasted my time watching it.

## Book Reviews

The government UFO files: The conspiracy of a cover-up - Kevin Randle

It is no surprise the Kevin Randle would write a book about conspiracies and cover-ups. The premise behind his theory about the Roswell event is that there is this immense cover-up. With that belief already in place, Randle proceeds to then present everything he finds to confirm this opinion. I am sure if he was looking for conspiracy covering up bigfoot, he could find the appropriate documents that prove it.

Some of Randle's prime cases were the Oscar and Echo flight incidents. He either overlooks or fails to make mention of the fact that the USAF felt it was important to focus on internally generated noise pulses based on their investigation of the Echo flight incident. Tim Hebert has documented this at his blog on the subject. The Oscar flight story was also pretty much debunked by Hebert. Many of these details were not mentioned by Randle in his book because it would destroy his theory of a government conspiracy.

Randle's spent a great deal of time piling up a bunch of popular and inconclusive UFO cases in an effort to prove his point. Add that to his myopic interpretation of the documents he presents and he draws the conclusion that we are being visited by alien spacecraft and the government is covering it up. This will convince those wanting to believe his conclusion but those outside of the UFO community, who look beyond the book, will probably not be so convinced. Mr. Randle should attempt to actually invest his time and money in finding the conclusive evidence he claims exists instead of trying to force fit his conclusions into the ambiguous evidence he provides. This kind of writing is nothing more than a desperate plea for people to accept Randle's version of UFO history.

I found the book rather boring. I saw just about everything written from "a different perspective". I am stuck between calling this a "bin it" book and "borrow it". I definitely would not buy it.